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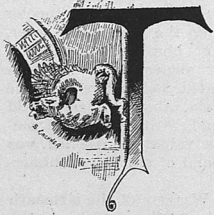
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ART TREASURES DISTRIBUTED.

BY E. T. LANDER.

THE event of the month in matters decorative has been the Escosura sale of surpassing interest. An equal opportunity for plucking flowers of artistic growth from beneath the auctioneer's hammer has not been offered since the Morgan collection in all its magnitude was dispersed to hundreds of households. By no means is so rich a chance ever underestimated by New York collectors. In this case a question of the art value of different objects was hardly to be raised. Each had been a selection of an artist for the sake of art. The consideration with decided contestants was that of comparative lengths of purses. With the business throughout, in its sustained animation founded upon good faith, an approach was made to the ideal auction.

The scattering of such a collection might be regretted, considering its definite representative character, affording a study of more than ordinary special value and completeness. This formed a most distinct as well as magnificent chapter from the full life of art at a remarkable period. Through increased intercommunication between all parts of the world, an opposite tendency is generally to be found in recently formed collections. A universality of taste is among the modern conditions arising from circumstance. In this case an exclusiveness of idea had been almost perfectly maintained. A small Oriental element was hardly sufficient to affect the predominant Spanish and Italian character of the representation. The geographical limit was held as strictly as that of time, the accumulation being in the best decorative forms of medieval antiquity.

Its distribution goes for the greater part to enrich the houses of fortunate people in this city, Boston and Washington. The commissions executed by Mr. Sabin and others for distant purchasers were extensive, with a grand share remaining for the metropolis. Orders to purchase were fulfilled to a large extent by Mr. George W. Cole, Messrs. Sypher & Co., and Mr. L. A. Lanthier. The proceeds amounted to somewhat less than \$120,000 instead of \$150,000 as predicted while the sale was going on. The financial result nevertheless fully equalled the most sanguine expectations of those essentially interested. To the casual observer the average rate of \$20,000 a session appeared in fair correspondence with even the rich values passing under review. The amount of bids for one evening was nearly \$51,000—an aggregate in connection with the series of modern paintings, engravings and art publications; and for one of the day sessions the sales amounted to upward of \$32,000. Manifestly the aspect of the business was not quite such as to discourage the collectors of objects of art. An immense public interest might also have signified the usefulness of the acquisition of such esteemed works for the museums.

The intense determination exercised by present seekers after decorative objects is becoming hardly second apparently to that of the bibliophiles; so high ran enthusiasm in the Escosura sale as to recall the pithy story connected with a London book auction, in which an antiquary being himself present when a coveted rare early edition of Shakespeare became eagerly contested, received a message from his purchasing agent among the audience inquiring if bids should be advanced beyond the previously specified limit; the answer written on a slip of paper was an emphatic affirmative, with the added quotation,

"And d—d be he who first cries, hold, enough."

It has been said that in this recent drawing from an artist's erstwhile treasury, people lost their heads; instead possibly the longest heads may prove to be represented by the most extravagant purchases. The bidding was frequently surprising, with a hold emotionally awaited. Among articles spiritedly contested was a small fire screen, showing the ravages of centuries in the foundation of its superb embroidered ornamentation. This article, once forming a possession of the Chateau de Bercy, is in carved wood, gilded, "de Toro," framing a panel of silk covered with needlework in gold and colors. As a specimen of carving of matchless beauty this work is hardly to be prized beyond its worth. In its embroidery of equally fine character the hues and the lustre are preserved in full brightness and splendor, although

the silken fabric has given way in different places, as seen in the very small sections left uncovered by the richly elaborate forms of the design. The price of \$1,050 paid for such a triumph of art amid decay went not without reason.

A Marie Antoinette sofa, in embroidered pink satin, of specially beautiful form and decoration, with an exquisitely carved design of a basket of flowers, gilded, adorning the upper part of the back, went to the victorious competitor for \$1,000. Another canopy in carved wood gilded, and covered with pink embroidered satin, bordered with laurel crowns, brought \$700, the first bid having been \$500. The same price was paid for a centre table of chimerical design in carved wood, gilded, "de Toro," once among the furniture of the Chateau de Bercy, and representing seventeenth century work of the finest order. A canopy of corresponding date, which brought \$825, provides a charming example of embroidery "au cordonnet," with flowers in varied colors on cream satin. Another of the superbly decorated sofas in carved and gilded work, with pink embroidered satin, was secured for \$550. For \$400 a purchaser won a bureau of the same period, ornamented with bronze.

The competition ran strong with the disposal of a rich series of screens of seventeenth century handiwork. The most highly valued among these, and which brought \$1,525, is of large size, with four folds, painted by Watteau. Another in carved wood, gilded, with four panels in cream silk embroidered, went to its purchaser for \$920. A screen with four folds bringing \$475 is in blue silk, with squares of gray silk embroidered in gold and silver lace. The fauteuils, chairs, tabourets, chests, desks and cabinets in this attractive division brought corresponding prices. One fauteuil for a marquis, in carved wood, gilded, and covered with pink embroidered silk, brought \$300, and for another of similar style, with needlework on satin, the purchaser gave \$325. The successful competitor for a fifteenth century fauteuil in the form of the letter X, with red velvet and gold adornment, paid \$275 for the article. A sixteenth century chair of carved wood, for a church, went for \$100, and \$150 was the price given for an Italian fauteuil of the same period, in gilded, carved wood, with covering of green velvet.

The bidding for some of the rich forms of tabourets might have savored of extravagance to the uninitiated regarding the values of carvings and tapestries of the highest quality. One of these in carved wood, gilded, with embroidery "au cordonnet" on gray green satin, went down at \$100; two others, with Gobelin tapestry and flowers, brought \$110 each, and \$225 each was the winning bid for two of the most admired tabourets of carved wood, gilded, and covered with Gobelin tapestry and gold tissue. Among other objects eagerly competed for by friends of lucky



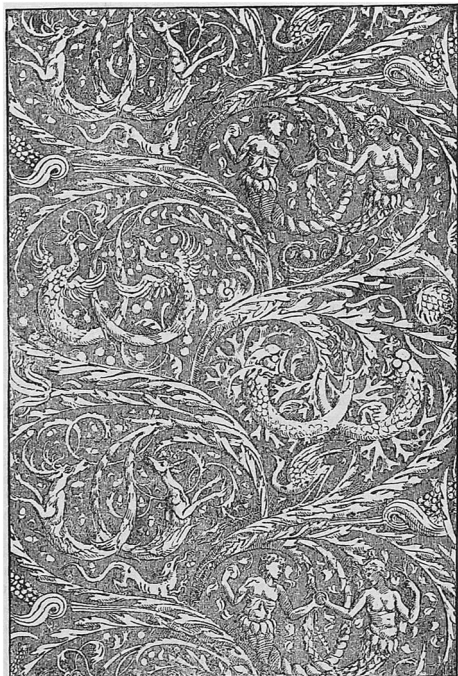
PERSIAN METAL WORK.

dogs or of their owners, was a "petite niche a chien," in carved wood, gilded, with covering of embroidered pink silk, formerly a possession of Petit Treanor, and which at \$140 was cheap enough for the happy winner of so extraordinary a variety of art production.

An amiable strife for the possession of sumptuous forms of chests, ended with the distribution of these at a fair valuation.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

One of carved wood, with the arms of Louis XII. of France, brought \$205; a chest of sixteenth century work in carved wood, gilded, went to the purchaser at \$225; a bid of \$300 secured another of the same period, inlaid with ivory, and the not insignificant sum of \$1,075 was paid for the grand piece of this variety,



OLD STAMPED LEATHER.

a fifteenth century Florentine "coffret de mariage," of great size, in carved and gilded wood, with a painting of the pre-Raphaelite period, showing numerous figures, forming the front panel.

The remaining articles of this department, which proved specially attractive to assembled collectors, included a sixteenth century table, carved with forms of children, fruits and flowers; an ebony writing desk, inlaid with shells and having claws of silver; a gilded bracket from the Chateau de Bercy, which was purchased for \$150, two others of the same estimate; a lutrin with carved work bringing \$350; a small carved bed of the date of 1648, which a bidder was fortunate enough to get for \$120; two door panels, richly carved, bringing \$140 each; English bellows, with sixteenth century carving, which went for \$150; a small desk in carved wood, gilded, bringing \$200; a clock, of the De Boule variety, at \$330; a figure of the Virgin, of Gothic character, in carved wood, gilded, which brought \$135; and two rose-wood cases, ornamented with bronzes, gilded, and with plaques of Sevres in turquoise, combined with gold decoration, and costing their present owner \$235 each.

The sale of eleven tapestries showed a valuation of \$5,765 for this number of very old pieces of much beauty. A piece represented as the oldest known in history, and which figured as a specimen of the highest importance in the Paris Universal Exhibition, is not, however, the one for which the highest price is paid. This distinction remained for a tapestry representing Christ on the Cross between the two thieves; no sooner was this put up than two or three bids of \$500 were simultaneously made. When it had been knocked down at a bid of \$800 a dispute arose, and on being put up again the piece brought \$875. Next to this in being coveted by different competitors under no necessity for counting the cost, is a Gothic tapestry representing people engaged in varied diversions of games in a garden, for which the bidding ran up to \$850.

The embroideries of the collection, forming one of its most beautiful features, were distributed to a remarkably appreciative group of buyers. For a wall hanging in blue satin, magnificently embroidered with flowers and birds, a bid of \$1,000 had been left at the salesrooms in advance to secure the piece, and this provident arrangement remained uncontested. Another drapery for walls in cream silk brocaded in multi color, and with the addition of four curtains, the whole being from a seventeenth century salon, was started at \$500, and going finally at \$850.

One large portiere of sixteenth century fabrication, in blue

velvet embroidered with gold, brought \$650. Another of that date, in blue satin embroidered with gold in design of figures and birds, went for \$400; the same price was paid for a fifteenth century altar piece of red velvet, with applique work representing the Birth of Christ, and \$150 was paid for a Byzantine altar piece of like material, with gold embroidery picturing the Coronation of the Virgin. Among the rich ecclesiastical vestments was a chasuble in red velvet, embroidered in gold, with band in the centre, designed after Raphael, which brought \$160; a clergyman's cape in gold embroidered red velvet, estimated by the buyer at \$140; another cape of a clergyman in velvet multi-color on a background of cream, representing the skin of a tiger, bringing \$175; and a clergyman's cape of blue velvet, embroidered with angels, costing the present owner \$140. For four squares of blue velvet, embroidered in gold and colors with the arms of the Emperor Charles V. of Spain, the purchaser paid \$150; for four bands of cream background, with seventeenth century needlework in gold and colors, the valuation reached was \$100; and \$150 was the estimate for a band of red velvet chimerically embroidered in gold.

A banner of the Corporation of Weavers of the sixteenth century, in green and red velvet, brought \$135, and \$325 was the price of a doublet of an English herald at arms of a century earlier. A beautiful piano cover of cream satin, with embroidery from an original by Marie Antoinette, was purchased for \$175. Among other superb pieces a portiere of white damask, embroidered in gold, went for \$160. A rich portiere, with lambrequins in red velvet and gold, for \$170; and a portiere of red velvet, embroidered with Hebrew inscriptions in gold, for \$175.

Much surprise has been expressed regarding the prices given for old lutes, violins and guitars; no purchaser, however, from this or other department has been heard from as being sick of his bargain. The antique costumes, including the original wearing apparel of royalty and aristocracy, were fairly, not unreasonably, valued. Among those bringing the highest bids were a court mantle worn by the wife of Charles III. of Spain, showing the arms of Castile and Leon in its embroidery on blue silk, which cost its new possessor \$200; a seventeenth century lord's costume, in violet silk, embroidered with spangles, bringing \$150; a dress of the same epoch, embroidered in silver, at \$105; and a dress of silver tissue, embroidered in colors, and a mantle of pale green silk and velvet, each valued by the present test at \$100.

The possession of the rarer pieces in the section of arms and armor was contested with almost martial spirit. The highest value represented was in a complete suit of armor, damascened in gold, which was secured by a bid of \$1,000; a damascened helmet brought \$115, and another \$100. A doublet of buffalo skin cost the buyer \$100; an old sword of the date of 1600 brought \$145, and another of Louis XV. variety, \$110. Old hunting knives and daggers, pistols enamelled with designs of chimeras, spurs inlaid in gold, and other objects were eagerly won. A sword, damascened in silver, brought \$150; a musket, inlaid with ivory, \$105; and one curious old musket went off at a bid of \$140.

A THIN solution of permagnate of potassa in hot water will make a good walnut color. Apply several coats, allowing plenty of time for drying between each coat. Boiled oil may be used as a polish. If a little turpentine is added to the oil it will work easier.



PERSIAN FAIENCE.